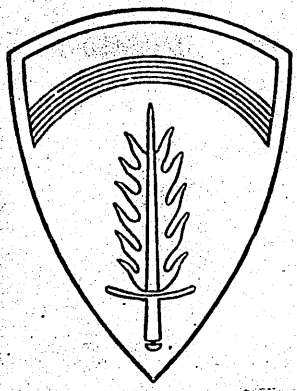
MS# P-041i
MS# P-041ii



ENGLISH COPY

OKH PROJECT # 7

GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND

German Critique of MS# P-041

REFERENCE COPY
TO BE DESTROYED WHEN NO LONGER NEEDED

USAREUR REFERENCE LIBRARY
APO 403 US ARMY

LIBRARY Property of U.S. Army

HISTORICAL DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE
FOREIGN MILITARY STUDIES BRANCH

74 pages

MS # P-041 11

GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND

General Critique of MSS # P-041a - P-041 11 and a Report on the September 1942 - June 1944 Period

By

Generaloberst a. D. Kurt Zeitzler

Translator: J.B. Robinson
Editor : G.C. Vanderstadt
Reviewer : H. Heitman

Historical Division
HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE
1953

MS # P-041 11

Kurt ZEITZLER
Generaloberst a.D.
Date of Birth: 9 June 1895
Place of Birth: Gossmar, Province of Brandenburg

Zeitzler joined the Infantry in March 1914, after graduating from high school, and in December of the same year was promoted second lieutenant, with rank dated June 1913. Throughout World War I he fought on the West Front as a platoon, company and regimental commander. At the end of the war he remained in the reduced Army Germany was allowed to maintain and after the usual training was granted General Staff Corps status in 1927.

When World War II broke out in September 1939, Zeitzler, a colonel by now, was in command of a regiment. He was transferred immediately to XXII Corps as Chief of Staff and took part in the Polish Campaign. Then he was assigned, again as Chief of Staff, to Panzer Group A*, with which he participated in the French Campaign.

Following an assignment as Chief of Staff, First Panzer Army, in Russia in 1941, and another as Chief of Staff, Army Group D, in France in 1942, Zeitzler, who had been promoted Generalmajor in January of the latter year, received double promotion to General der Infanterie nine months later in September 1942, and was appointed Chief of the Army General Staff.

Promoted Generaloberst in January 1944, the general resigned from his post as Chief of Army General Staff in July of that year after violent differences of opinion with Hitler on the conduct of operations. He was placed in the Army High Command Officer Reserve Pool and in January 1945 was retired from the Army.

---

* A panzer army minus rear administrative echelons.

On 6 December 1945 the general was taken into custody by the British and was held prisoner until 26 February 1947.

CONTENTS

			Page
CHAPTER 1.	GENERAL CRITIQUE OF MSS # P-041a - P-041hh "THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND"		1
CHAPTER 2.	THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND, SEPTEMBER 1942 - JUNE 1944		8
Section	I.	The Commander in Chief of the Army	8
		1. The Commander in Chief Personally	8
		2. Hitler's Command Methods	13
		3. Hitler's Working Methods	17
	II.	The Chief of the Army General Staff	21
		1. Background	21
		2. The Influence of the Chief of the Army General Staff on the Conduct of Operations	22
		3. Office Routine of the Chief of the Army General Staff	24
	III.	The Army Group Commanders	26
		1. Background	26
		2. The Command Methods of the Army Group Commanders under the Direction of the Commander in Chief of the Army	27
	IV.	The Army General Staff	29
		1. Organization	29
		2. Mission and Work	33
		a. Operations	33
		b. Organizational Problems	35
		c. Training Activities	37
		d. The Intelligence Service	39
		e. The Chiefs of Arms and Services	40
		f. The Chief of Supply and Administration	41
		g. Transportation	41
		h. General Staff Personnel Affairs and Replacements	42
		i. Liaison Officers	43
		j. The Headquarters Commandant	43
		3. Position and Authority	43
	V.	Army General Staff - Wehrmacht High Command - Wehrmacht Operations Staff Relations and Cooperation	45
		1. Relations	45
		2. Cooperation	48

C O N T E N T S cont'd

		Page
VI.	Army General Staff - Navy - Luftwaffe Relations and Cooperation	53
	1. Relations	53
	2. Cooperation	56
VII.	Summary	64

ILLUSTRATIONS

Chart A -	The German Army High Command, September 1942 - June 1944	68
Chart B -	The Army General Staff, September 1943 - June 1944	69

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL CRITIQUE OF MSS # P-041a - hh "THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND"

The Manuscripts under review form a comprehensive study of the organization of the Army High Command before and during the war, and of the manifold problems and difficulties confronting the Army High Command in the performance of its mission during mobilization and later during the war. The study shows clearly "how things were" and offers an excellent foundation for future studies on "how things should have been" as well as for the development of ideas for the future.

However, too little space is devoted to the operational activities of the Army High Command. Whether this is intentional or not is unknown to me, but since I personally regard this subject as particularly important because of its value for future research, I have treated it, for my term of office as chief of the Army General Staff during the war, in a report which I am including as Chapter 2. In order to preserve the consistency of the over-all study, I have intentionally treated the topic only in general terms in my report.

To round out the picture presented by the study presently under review, a further chapter should be prepared on the exercise of operational command during the time prior to my assumption of office as chief of the Army General Staff. This could be done either in a generalizing way, as I have treated the subject for my term of office in Chapter 2, or in some other way. This additional chapter should be followed by a second study

to be completed at some later date.

The second study would contain factual examples of the exercise of operational command by the Army High Command from each phase of the war and should be prepared only from this point of view. The advantage would be that not only the author but also the reader could draw practical conclusions from experience and could form ideas for the future. This is the advantage of factual examples over general theorizing and this is what makes a presentation based on factual examples so instructive as far as the operational command is concerned. The procedure suggested here would have the added advantage that the completion of the present study, which already has taken too long, would not be further delayed.

In the preparation of the suggested studies, the war should be divided into four phases according to the reorganisations which took place in the top-level command of the German Army, namely

Phase I, September 1939 to December 1941 -- the period from the beginning of the war to the resignation of the Commander in Chief of the Army.

Phase II, December 1941 to September 1942 -- the period during which Generaloberst Halder continued in office as chief of the Army General Staff.

Phase III, September 1942 to the end of June 1944 -- the period during which I was chief of the Army General Staff.

Phase IV, July 1944 to the end of the war -- the period during which Generaloberst Guderian was chief of the Army General Staff.

I consider the winter campaign in Russia, in Phase I, and the Stalingrad tragedy, in Phase III, as particularly instructive examples of the conduct of German army operations. Probably it is no longer possible to gather accurate data, such as time schedules, organizational arrangements, original orders and situation maps, but this is not essential for the purpose in view. The purpose of the examples would be to show the methods of command, thereby enabling the reader to draw his own conclusions as far as the top-level army command is concerned.

Admittedly, these accounts would require another voluminuous and time-consuming work and it would be necessary for them to be written by the highest-ranking men who participated in the events concerned, since they alone have a full insight. However, there can be no doubt that they would furnish a variety of extremely valuable material, from which lessons could be learned and ideas developed for the future.

In view of the writers who were available to prepare the manuscripts under review here, it is only natural that the pre-war and mobilization periods and the first two phases of the war have been described in great detail. This is quite in order, since these periods provide a basis for an examination of the entire period under study. However, it is a mistake to refer only incidentally to the third and fourth phases of the war, or to treat them superficially, or dismiss them with such general remarks as "the Chief of the Army General Staff was degraded to the position of an executive office of the command" or "after the dismissal of General Halder the interest of the top-level command in any systematic supervision of training steadily declined." The third and fourth phases of the war are

of particular interest for judging the German Army High Command because of the enormous internal and external difficulties which had to be faced at that time.

For the reasons stated above, I have decided to divide the critical review which I have been asked to write on this study into two principal parts, namely, Chapter 1 "Review of MSS # P-041a - hh THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND" and a supplement as Chapter 2 entitled "THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND -- SEPTEMBER 1942 TO JUNE 1944." Chapter 1 contains my personal comments on the study as a whole as well as comments on each individual contribution *, and is so arranged that each part can be used separately. My comments on the individual contributions are intentionally brief, because the contributions themselves have been written in great detail. I have only corrected inaccuracies, supplied missing facts, emphasized the principal problems, evaluated each contribution and, whenever necessary, commented on the performances described therein so as to prevent their being seen solely through the eyes of the author.

Chapter 2 covers the third phase of the war, the period during which I was Chief of the Army General Staff. In this chapter I have followed the pattern of the entire study, that is, I have treated my subject in a general manner, but nevertheless in such a way that it will be fully comprehensible even if used separately. Here, again, I have limited myself to the most essential points, since otherwise the entire study would have become too voluminous; clarity and readability would have suffered.

* These comments have been removed from this manuscript and bound as a part of MS # P-041 11.

the principal point of view would have been lost and the main problems would have disappeared under the welter of material, a danger which some of the contributors have barely escaped.

I would like to suggest the preparation of an additional supplement on the fourth phase of the war, from July 1944 to the end of the war, similar to Chapter 2 of this present manuscript.

It can be said of the over-all study that its arrangement is clear, intelligible and logical; the same can be said of the sub-titles selected for the individual contributions. In the case of two of the special topics, namely, MS # P-041q, "The Chief of Supply and Administration" and MS # P-041r, "The Chief of Army Transportation," the question arises whether or not these parts, because of their volume and arrangement (see my comments on MS # P-041q) and because of their special contents, should remain as parts of the study as a whole or should be taken out and treated as special subjects and only referred to throughout the over-all study. One thing is certain: special subjects are usually studied only by those who take a special interest in them. For this reason it might be better to treat these two subjects as separate studies, although the danger exists that this might create the impression that the Army supply service and the Army transportation service were more or less independent organizations and not auxiliary facilities of the Army High Command and integral parts of the command system itself.

The following remains to be said of the study as a whole: It is obvious to the reader that the study has been compiled by a great number of writers. Each manuscript in its entirety, frequently even in its

various parts or subdivisions, reveals the personal concepts of the author or authors by whom it has been written. One author may be very specific, even too specific, or may revert to the First World War or even as far back as 1870, while the other is brief and to the point. Some authors have not confined themselves to their topics but have written about everything they know; others have adhered religiously to their topics and the sub-titles. One author merely generalizes while the other cites practical examples; one talks only about historical facts while the other draws conclusions from the facts and deduces lessons for the future, and so on. It is therefore natural that the over-all study lacks the uniformity which might have been expected in the work of a single writer.

In spite of all this, a certain uniform line of thought runs through the entire study. This is due to the intelligent way in which the separate topics were assigned and perhaps also to discussions, unobtrusive guidance, and sound, practical, general staff work. Thus, since everyone apparently did his best, the completed study, together with the supplements, is a very useful work. It gives a good historical account of the subject and provides a sound basis for continued research. It will always remain an excellent source of reference and a veritable mine of knowledge for specialists.

An examination of the entire study clearly shows how a flaw in the top-level command organization will permeate down to the lowest echelons and directly affect all the work; how a fanatical, unqualified, daemonic person, if he be in command, can misuse, ruin and destroy a sound organisation and cause all practical work to come to naught. However, this is

a deduction which is out of place here but which will inevitably occur to the reader.

CHAPTER 2

THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND, SEPTEMBER 1942 - JUNE 1944

I. THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMY

1. The Commander in Chief Personally. The command authority over the entire Army was vested in the Commander in Chief. The Commander in Chief was Hitler, who at the same time was the head of the State and the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. He exercised his command chiefly through four individuals and their staffs: the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command (Generalfeldmarschall Keitel), the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff (Generaloberst Jodl), the Chief of the Army General Staff (Generaloberst Zeitzler), the Chief of the Army Personnel Office (General Schmundt) and their staffs, namely, the Wehrmacht High Command, the Wehrmacht Operations Staff (a part of the Wehrmacht High Command), the Army General Staff and the Army Personnel Office, respectively. In addition, he availed himself of the services of other individuals in special fields, for example, the Minister of Armament and Munitions, the Inspector General of Panzer Forces, the Chief of the National Socialist Guidance Staff, to all of which positions he appointed new men, whom he made directly responsible to himself.

A properly integrated Army High Command no longer existed at this time. Such an institution to control the Army was an obviously logical necessity, but Hitler rejected the idea and created his own impractical organization. It seems that he had two principle reasons for this, first,

his intense distrust of the Army as a whole and army generals and the Army General Staff in particular; secondly, the dictatorial nature of his concepts. As a dictator, he disliked men who had become too powerful, who had won great fame and admiration, and who thus might become his rivals. He preferred to surround himself with men whom he could play off against each other and who were forced by the unnatural conditions of the organisation to oppose each other. This was the basic principle of his system of command.

The attitude of the Commander in Chief of the Army toward his army was as unfavorable as could be imagined. In contrast to his attitude toward the Luftwaffe and the Navy, he disliked and distrusted the Army. Possibly, this was due to his dislike of the former Reichswehr *, which had formed the nucleus of the new army, and of the men who had commanded it, such as Freiherr von Fritsch, von Brauchitsch, and Beck. Furthermore, as its commander in chief he learned more unpleasant facts about the Army -- reports on courts martial and desertions, for example, than he did about the other branches of the Wehrmacht, where these disagreeable matters were handled by the respective commanders in chief and never brought to his attention. Frequently he would remark: "The Army, naturally!" or "I am always having trouble with the Army!" Also, he was fond of quoting his Waffen-SS as an example for the Army to emulate.

The leading men in Hitler's clique, Goering and Himmler, naturally supported him in his attitude toward the Army and it was inevitable that

---

* The 100 000-man army Germany was allowed to maintain under the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. (Reviewer)

this attitude had to become known to the entire Army, particularly since he never undertook to improve the situation by visiting the troops at the fronts.

The Army at no time received as good treatment as the other branches. Thus, the replacements it was allocated were not as good as those allocated to the other branches and included, for example, numerous ethnic Germans who were not fully reliable.

For all the above reasons it must be said that Hitler did not perform his mission as Commander in Chief of the Army in the manner in which that mission should have been performed and could have been performed by a man charged solely with this responsibility.

Through the organization he had created and by means of the assignment of special missions, Hitler had defined the responsibilities of the men who assisted him in commanding the Army. The Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command had taken over certain functions of the former Commander in Chief of the Army, including military judiciary powers; he was also responsible for administration and security in all enemy territories occupied by the Army and not under civilian administration; the commander of the Replacement Army also was under his command. The Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff advised Hitler on operations of the Wehrmacht in general and on army operations in all Wehrmacht High Command theaters of operations * in particular. The Chief of the Army General Staff

* At this time all theaters except the Eastern Front were Wehrmacht theaters of operations, which meant that they were controlled directly by the Wehrmacht High Command instead of by the Chief of the Army General Staff. (Reviewer)

advised Hitler on operations on the Eastern Front and on matters handled by the individual divisions of the Army General Staff. The Chief of the Personnel Office advised Hitler on appointments to all officer vacancies and on all other officer personnel matters.

The appropriate sections of this chapter will reveal in what measure the men referred to above actually performed advisory functions or were merely the purveyors of orders.

Hitler was not a professional soldier but nevertheless considered himself a good soldier and a great strategist. His belief that he was a good soldier was based on his war experience and active service as a corporal in World War I; his belief that he was a great strategist was based on his confidence in his self-conceived genius and in his intuition, and on his tremendous conceit. The clique with which he had surrounded himself supported him in both of these beliefs.

Hitler lacked the professional training which the commander in chief of an army needs. No matter how clever and ingenious a person might be, he must have received practical training to be able to command an army of millions; he must have a fund of practical experience gained in certain military command and staff positions, such as chief of staff or other General Staff positions or in assignments as a unit commander. Otherwise he cannot possibly estimate correctly the efficacy of the instrument he is to wield or assess situations and the prospects of success in military operations. These are qualities which cannot be acquired by even a most assiduous study of military history and other military literature, subjects on which it must be conceded that Hitler was extremely well informed.

Hitler could have balanced his deficiencies to some extent if he had availed himself of the services of the men and staffs who were capable of advising him and existed for that very purpose and -- if he had followed their advice. This he refused to do, since he considered it incompatible with his idea of his own infallibility.

For a full understanding of the performances of a specific commander in chief, it is necessary to analyze his character and personal qualities. In considering Hitler this would require a special study, which would take quite some time to compile since even those who knew him extremely well needed a long time to analyze his character and personal qualities -- provided it is possible at all to analyze a man so complicated, dual-natured and daemonic.

For the purpose of this study it is probably safe to confine ourselves to the statement that he admittedly was clever and talented but completely unscrupulous and devoid of any sense of good and evil; that he was as firmly convinced of his own genius, his own intuition and his own infallibility as he was filled with a deep-rooted, malignant distrust of all other men, including his own advisors.

To round out this picture of Hitler's personality, it is necessary to consider the influence he exerted on his advisors and on the commanders serving under him. There can be no doubt of his enormous influence on the vast majority of people who came into contact with him. In my opinion, all persons under his direct control can be divided into four categories:

a. Those who regarded him as a sublime and infallible being from the outset. They looked up to him devoutly, obeyed his every command,

and never contradicted him.

b. Those who originally had their own convictions but whose spirits he very soon broke, so that they finally more or less resembled those in category a. in their actions and concepts.

c. Those whose spirits he could not break but who, for various reasons, could not make up their minds to break with him. This resulted in serious differences of opinion until Hitler discharged them at a time convenient to himself.

d. Those who were determined not to be subdued by him. Such men very soon found themselves involved in severe mental conflicts, in which they had to choose between their positions and loyalty to their own consciences. The only alternatives left to such men were either to remain true to their convictions and commit suicide or to quarrel openly with Hitler at mortal risk and compel him to accept their resignation from office.

2. Hitler's Command Methods. The methods employed by Hitler in commanding the Army corresponded to his over-all conception of the command function. He did not command from a high plane by issuing directives and instructions which left his advisers and unit commanders freedom of action and personal responsibility. He conducted operations primarily by means of individual decisions and specific orders, which prescribed even the smallest details.

To command in this way he had to acquaint himself with all details; he therefore insisted on being informed of the most trivial things. He was just as much concerned about the over-all production of weapons and

ammunition -- comparing the figures very closely with those of World War I, as he was with any improvement in some small weapon. He was just as concerned about the over-all officer replacement situation as about a new medal, which he generally designed himself. He showed great interest in the total amount of concrete used in the Atlantic Wall as well as in the improvement of the smallest bunkers, the plans for which he personally changed. He was just as interested in the general supply problem of synthetic textiles production, as in some change in the peacetime uniforms for officers.

He could not or would not believe that it exceeded the ability of any individual, no matter how clever and ingenious he might be, to exercise command by these methods. Furthermore, he applied his methods not only in his role as Commander in Chief of the Army but also as the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and as head of the State, which means that the responsibilities which he had taken upon himself as Commander in Chief of the Army were multiplied.

For the most part he also neglected to coordinate the various agencies which assisted him in commanding the Army, considering such a coordination to be unnecessary because he held all the strings in his own hands anyway. It was likewise quite in line with his general views and his mistrustful attitude that his individual advisors were not too well informed about each others' activities and about the over-all situation. In this way he did not have to fear competition and could play one man off against another so that, in his own opinion, he towered above them all.

He attempted to employ this method even in the actual conduct of army

operations. He did not control the army groups by means of assigned missions which left the responsible commanders a free hand to choose the means for accomplishing these missions -- a system in which the German Army and its commanders and General Staff officers had been trained intensively over a period of many years. If he actually was induced to assign a clear-cut mission he either invalidated the assignment from the outset by prescribing the manner in which the mission was to be carried out or interfered about details during the course of the operation in such a way that he wound up by carrying out the original mission himself.

Thus, there could be no talk of the long-term strategy customary at such high levels; instead, control was exercised by means of specific orders. Hitler held the reins tightly rather than loosely and concerned himself with the smallest details, such as the commitment of reserve battalions or the use of new, special, individual weapons, matters which were neither the concern of the top-level command nor of the commanders of army groups, but should have been left to local tactical commanders at lower levels. Because of this attention to every minor detail and because even trivial matters required the approval of the Commander in Chief of the Army, most decisions were made too late or were overtaken by events.

Just as he intentionally refrained from coordinating his many advisors, he blindfolded his army group and army commanders in strategic matters, furnishing them only incomplete or deliberately biased information on the over-all strategic situation. He had special reasons for this in addition to the reasons which determined his system of command in general; he feared, namely, that the commanders would be unfavorably affected by

reverses on other fronts. This method of hoodwinking he called "maintaining secrecy", as defined by him in his notorious Directive No. 1. *

The strategic data which a commander in chief obtains through the accurate and objective work of his General Staff and from reports and estimates of the situation submitted by his subordinate commanders was not in keeping with his conception of command. Because of their objective outlook, he regarded the men concerned as defeatists, or else assumed that they wanted to display their superior knowledge and were trying to lecture him. For the most part he either ignored or completely rejected their proposals, preferring to follow the pattern he had set up for himself. This probably coincided with his conception of a dictator, or, as a Greek philosopher said almost two thousand years ago, "a tyrant sees only what he wants to see."

He checked the execution of his orders for the conduct of operations. Nothing could have been said against this practice if the checking had been done by him, by his advisers or their agents, or by means of reports requested from the commanders in question, although even these procedures should not be overdone. However, in making these checks, he also had his own methods, which were more in keeping with his mistrustful attitude and with his conception of a dictator. He liked to have the Army supervised by agents of the Luftwaffe or the SS or by some special deputy or other. The reports obtained in this way were usually not impartial and were based purely on personal impressions, or were even biased or compiled with a

* An order that nobody was to know more than was essential for the performance of his specific mission. (Reviewer)

fine sense of what the dictator would like to hear; they therefore failed to serve the cause and did more harm than good. Thus, he was more inclined to believe the irresponsible remarks of his personal servant, who had visited an SS unit at some part of the front, than an official report prepared by the responsible commander of the front sector in question.

The rule that a responsible high-level commander should make frequent visits to the critical points of an operation, or at least to the appropriate headquarters, in order to obtain clear on-the-spot impressions was followed by him only very infrequently, no matter how pointedly and unequivocally he was urged to do so. His principal reason and that of his immediate staff was that the head of the State has no right to expose himself to such danger. Whenever he actually made such a visit the results were good. Instead of adhering to the time-tested rule he invented a new method: the commanders at critical points had to report to him at his headquarters. That it was a grave mistake to ask responsible commanders to leave their troops during a critical situation needs no explanation or comment.

3. Hitler's Working Methods. The working methods applied by Hitler as Commander in Chief of the Army were governed by his working methods as head of the State and by the daily routine established at his headquarters.

He preferred to work at night and turned night into day, since he could think and work best during the night hours. Thus, as far as an outsider could ascertain, he rarely retired before two or three, and sometimes not even before four or five in the morning. He arose during the late hours of the forenoon.

The first discussion of the situation usually took place around noon, after Hitler had been briefly oriented by his adjutant. This noon conference was attended by his four advisors on army operations and by the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the liaison officer of the Navy and a large group from Hitler's Headquarters including the headquarters stenographers. At times Goering, the Commander in Chief of the Navy and other individuals also attended.

The Eastern situation was discussed first, because the Chief of the Army General Staff usually returned to his command post after the conclusion of this part of the discussion. Then followed a discussion of the situation in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of operations, the air and naval situations, and other matters. During this orientation period, decisions were made and orders drafted and signed. The discussion of the over-all situation sometimes lasted for hours; the most trivial things were discussed, and Hitler himself touched on the most remote questions and elaborated on them for hours.

The afternoon was set aside for conferences held by Hitler in his several capacities as Head of the State, Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and at times also as Commander in Chief of the Army, as well as for solemn ceremonies at which decorations were awarded and promotions announced.

The discussion of the evening situation, usually at 2200 hours or even later, was attended by a smaller group. Here, the Chief of the Army General Staff usually reported on the Eastern situation by telephone from his command post, but in person if important events had occurred or if decisions had to be made.

Extensive discussions concerning problems connected with large-scale operations took place as occasion demanded during the late hours of the night. The army group and army commanders called in from the front on these occasions usually participated in the discussions of the situation and were permitted to make brief statements. For the most part, however, they had to listen to long-winded lectures about everything imaginable, without having the opportunity to say a word. At times, special conferences were arranged for them in the afternoon or during the night.

Besides this daily routine, time had to be found for special events, such as State visits by allied Heads of State, demonstrations of weapons, addresses to commanders, and the increasingly infrequent airplane flights to the headquarters of army groups.

In addition to political and military discussions, banquets and elaborate "show" discussions of the situation took place during official State visits.

The demonstrations of weapons served to exhibit new inventions and to introduce new weapons and equipment. A large group of officers and members of the Ministry of Armament and Munitions were asked to attend.

Front line commanders and commanders from the Zone of Interior were called in to attend the addresses to commanders, which were arranged by the Personnel Office. On these occasions Hitler spoke for hours, aiming at a propagandistic effect, at improving the morale and at bringing the commanders under his personal spell.

During his visits to army groups, Hitler attended the situation discussions at army group headquarters and held conferences with the army

group commanders and with the army commanders whose presence had been requested. Unfortunately, he did not go far enough forward to visit the troops.

The above is an outline of Hitler's working methods at his headquarters in Eastern Prussia. The system was similar when he was at the Berghof, in Berchtesgaden, the sole change being that the Chief of the Army General Staff then reported on the situation by telephone from his command post in Eastern Prussia. Once in a while the Chief of the Army General Staff had to proceed to Berchtesgaden for several days to report in person. Occasionally, he despatched the Chief or some other senior General Staff officer of the Operations Branch to Berchtesgaden.

In the exercise of command, the procedure was that drafts of orders, for which Hitler had previously given the necessary specifications, were submitted to him for correction and signature. At other times he mentioned only brief phrases according to which the orders were prepared, or he composed them himself and dictated them to a member of his staff.

He appeared to dislike conversing with unit commanders on the telephone. When he did telephone them, which happened very rarely, it was only to give some of his orders the necessary emphasis or to warn the commanders to hold out at all costs. In contrast, he frequently called his advisors at any hour during the day or night to obtain details or to inquire about critical situations at the front. During a crisis he also permitted his advisors to call him at any time. Direct telephone calls from the commanders at the front were usually unsuccessful, since Hitler disliked making decisions by telephone unless it was a question of

"holding out at all costs."

II. THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF

1. Background. Originally, the mission of the Chief of the Army General Staff had been to direct the operations of the Army on behalf of the Commander in Chief of the Army and to control the Army General Staff. During the first and second phases of the war this mission had been curtailed and the Chief of the Army General Staff now acted only as an adviser on army operations at the Eastern Front; he also continued to control the Army General Staff insofar as the reorganization permitted. At the beginning of the third phase of the war *, his authority in controlling the Army General Staff had been further curtailed by the fact that he had been formally deprived of responsibility for General Staff Corps personnel affairs. Apart from certain Army General Staff functions, the Chief of the Army General Staff thus, during the course of the war, became in practice nothing but the Chief of Staff for the Eastern Front.

But even this position did not correspond to the former conception of the position of a Chief of Staff at a high headquarters in the field forces, because Hitler disliked the idea that his Chief of Staff should be an adviser in the true sense of the word, a fact which had become evident a short time after he assumed command. All he wanted was a man who transmitted his, Hitler's, orders and views unconditionally, who supported his ideas without criticism and propagandized him and his leadership.

---

* The period under discussion in this manuscript, during which the author served as Chief of the Army General Staff. (Reviewer)

The Chief of the Army General Staff now had to decide whether he wanted to follow this path or remain true to his former convictions as a soldier and a man. This decision was a personal matter and a question of character.

Since it was not possible for him to resign from his post after he had realized the implications of the situation, the Chief of the Army General Staff * perforce soon found himself involved in a serious mental conflict concerning his position and his personal views; in addition, he was required to do many things which were against his conscience. This naturally led to serious disagreements and sharp disputes with Hitler as his Commander in Chief, which in turn necessarily led to the Chief of the Army General Staff requesting a transfer to some other post or retirement from the Army. These requests were promptly disapproved by the Commander in Chief and, if repeated, were rejected even more curtly, since it was his belief that "a soldier should not leave his post in wartime." If the man in question was dissatisfied with the outcome, he was again confronted with a difficult decision. This decision again was also a question of the personality and character of the individual concerned.

2. The Influence of the Chief of the Army General Staff on the Conduct of Operations. In practice Hitler refused to be influenced basically by anyone. He sometimes listened to the advice of others before making a decision, but usually made his decision alone beforehand; and once he had made up his mind, he stuck to his decision with an unprecedented

* It should be borne in mind that the author himself was Chief of the Army General Staff during the period under review in this manuscript. (Reviewer)

obstinacy and was impervious to all counter-arguments. No logical arguments, no reasonable grounds could dissuade him, no matter if many hours or even days were spent in the effort to do so.

This was the reason why he also could not be influenced basically by the Chief of the Army General Staff as far as the conduct of operations was concerned. Only in a very few cases was this possible, as though by a miracle, after constant and ardent persuasion. Possibly, an indirect influence was exercised by the factual and dispassionate presentation of a matter and by the pointed and blunt statement of opposing opinions. One argument or another might register and bring results, or might be used by Hitler as his own idea at some later date. A small measure of influence could also be exercised by shelving or delaying measures conceived by him in a fit of rage. Unfortunately, these practices could be applied successfully only in very few cases. Even a blunt refusal to issue orders of which one personally disapproved for moral reasons seldom brought the desired results; Hitler merely had them issued by his chief adjutant. Attempts to influence him through someone in his entourage were of no avail, since these men usually failed at the crucial moment.

It was natural that the Chief of the Army General Staff had only a small influence on the army group commanders on the Eastern Front, and on their plans, since their freedom of action was extremely limited because of Hitler's methods of command. Furthermore, they were directly under Hitler's command and knew that the Chief of the Army General Staff had no authority whatsoever. Influence could be exerted only because of the mutual respect and trust which existed and because both parties realized

how difficult it was to deal with the Commander in Chief. The influence exerted in this way naturally could have only a limited practical effect.

The influence of the Chief of the Army General Staff over the branches of the Army General Staff was unlimited and his influence on the General Staff Corps as such remained unchanged, insofar as it was not restricted by the reorganization or by Hitler's consistent opposition to and constant distrust of the General Staff. The natural result of the reorganization was that the General Staff Corps officers employed in Wehrmacht theaters of operations were more or less under the influence of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, and this was what Hitler intended.

3. Office Routine of the Chief of the Army General Staff. The routine of the Chief of the Army General Staff was determined, on the one hand, by the situation discussions and reports held at Hitler's headquarters, on the other hand, by the work within his own staff and by personal discussions and telephone conversations or correspondence with the army group commanders at the Eastern Front and their chiefs of staff. In addition to the work in his own headquarters, which started very early in the morning and continued throughout the entire day, the work program had to include the nightly work at Hitler's headquarters and had to provide for constant close contact with the various command headquarters of the Eastern Front.

In his own staff the routine was governed by traditional and proven principles, according to which the morning and afternoon briefing periods were conducted by the adjutant or an expert of the Operations Branch and forenoon and evening discussions were held with the various branch chiefs.

In addition, individual reports were made throughout the day by the branch chiefs or their special assistants, by the chiefs of arms and services, the Chief of Supply and Administration with his agents, the Chief of Army Transportation, the Chief Army Signal Officer and others. Furthermore, numerous telephone conversations were held daily with the army group commanders and their chiefs of staff, and, during critical situations, with the army commanders or their chiefs of staff, besides the telephone and personal discussions with the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. Besides all this, trips had to be made to Hitler's headquarters, which consumed a great deal of time and the purpose of which was to discuss the situation and the night reports. Then, the time of the Chief of the Army General Staff was taken up until far into the night by his own reflections and estimates of the situation, as well as by an extensive private correspondence with the army group commanders concerning their problems.

Private discussions with the Commander in Chief of the Army were a new feature. This innovation was accomplished despite opposition by Hitler's clique and by the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, who liked to be present at all times, and despite Hitler's objections. Hitler realized very well that a subordinate could not talk as freely and unreservedly if a large group were present. These private discussions proved very useful although they generally led to sharp differences of opinion and violent disputes.

The daily routine described above was interrupted by occasional visits of the Chief of the Army General Staff to the army groups and armies at the Eastern Front, to the war colleges and the courses for high-level

field commanders and to the General Staff offices which had remained in and near Berlin as well as by visits of the commanders and chiefs of staff from the Eastern Front to the Chief of the Army General Staff and occasional visits by the chiefs of staff of the Hungarian and Roumanian units committed on the Eastern Front.

The work of the Chief of the Army General Staff was seriously hampered whenever Hitler moved his headquarters to the Berghof, in Berchtesgaden, while the Chief of the Army General Staff had to remain at his combat post in Eastern Prussia. In addition to the daily reports which he made to the Fuehrer by telephone, the Chief of the Army General Staff at such times was either compelled to fly once each week to the Berghof or to stay there for a fairly long time. In the latter case, he was separated from his staff sections, the chiefs of which in their turn had to fly to him.

III. THE ARMY GROUP COMMANDERS

1. Background. The army group commanders directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief of the Army can be divided into two categories:

A: Commanders who had reached their positions only because of their high qualifications, but in whom Hitler was otherwise disinterested or whom he even disliked.

B: Commanders who were likewise well qualified, but whom Hitler favored because of their manner and personal attitude, and who therefore were "persona grata" with him.

The commanders of category A met with great difficulties. In his dealings with them, Hitler was cautious and watchful and displayed a suspicious and at times completely unfriendly attitude. As a result of

this distrust he would immediately believe unfavorable comments and even slanderous remarks made about them by civilians and Party members, generally without giving the commanders an opportunity to defend themselves. If not in line with his own way of thought, their reports and unbiased estimates of the strategic situation, as well as their well-considered arguments against his strategic ideas, were regarded by him for the most part as unwelcome attempts to lecture him, as evidence of a "know-it-all" attitude, or as uncalled for criticism and sometimes even as defeatism. His opinions of these commanders -- which were frequently voiced in front of a large assembly -- were demoralizing, often uncouth and insulting. Commanders in this category were generally relieved of their posts sooner or later, or fell into even greater disfavor. This was the reason for the great turn-over in army group commanders.

Category B was very small and contained commanders to Hitler's liking. At times they had his complete confidence. They were generally employed at critical points or had to take the place of dismissed commanders of category A. No attempts were made to slander these men, since slanderers were acute enough to sense that such attempts were not desired. However, even members of this category fell into disfavor whenever they remained true to their own convictions and thus came in conflict with Hitler.

2. <u>The Command Methods of the Army Group Commanders under the Direction of the Commander in Chief of the Army</u>. The command methods of the commanders of army groups were influenced to a great extent by the command methods of the Commander in Chief of the Army. They were now no longer able to command by means of assigned missions and at long range,

as was necessary at such a high level and commensurate with their whole conception of command, but had to adapt themselves to commanding at short range and to interference in trivial matters. They had to request approval for every small detail and ask for decisions in extremely unimportant matters. Hardly anything was left for them to decide independently or to assume responsibility for.

This system of command necessarily also affected the armies, corps and divisions and even the lowest units, much to the detriment of the cause. Opportunities which could have been seized if the commanders had been permitted to make their own decisions on their own responsibility first had to be reported to the higher level and approval had to be obtained for all planned operations. The result was that the opportunities usually were missed: the decisions arrived too late. All these were consequences of the system of command at the top level.

The commanders were allowed to work in accordance with former principles when furnishing data for the Army High Command, but this soon brought them into conflict with the views of the Commander in Chief of the Army. If their opinions were at variance with those of the Commander in Chief, they were disposed of with a wave of the hand or rejected as unasked advice. Thus, the unbiased evaluation of data could have little or no effect, likewise to the detriment of the cause.

A particular disadvantage of this system of command was the fact that the Commander in Chief of the Army did not visit critical points of the front whenever a crisis occurred; if he had done so, decisions could have been made more quickly. The summoning of the army group commanders to

Hitler's headquarters necessarily had two disadvantages: during periods of heavy fighting, the troops were deprived of their commanders, who were unable to accomplish anything with the Commander in Chief of the Army; decisions were even further delayed because of the absence of the commanders. The circumstances which had thus developed even lessened the beneficial results of the visits which army group commanders customarily paid to subordinate headquarters and troops. Nevertheless, they continued making such visits frequently, since they regarded them as an important function of command.

It is only natural that the authority of the army group commanders over the staffs and troops under them was undermined by the system of command which had gradually evolved and by the fact that they were hardly able to decide anything themselves, had constantly to ask for higher approval and were rarely able to have their opinions accepted. The commanders often complained bitterly about this system of command and the curtailment of their own responsibility, but all representations to the Commander in Chief of the Army were of no avail. He simply stuck to his guiding role.

IV. THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF

1. Organization. On the whole, the organization of the Army General Staff, which had proved satisfactory, remained unchanged even during this phase of the war (Chart B, Army General Staff, September 1942 - June 1944).

The only real change was that the positions of the Assistant Chiefs of Staff (Oberquartiermeister) were discontinued because of the dire need for good senior General Staff officers for employment at the fronts. The

Assistant Chiefs of Staff could be dispensed with since the duties of the Army General Staff had been reduced through the creation of the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. The resultant additional work for the Chief of the Army General Staff had to be accepted as an unavoidable disadvantage with which he was able to cope. Although a great many branches now depended directly upon the Chief of the Army General Staff, the chiefs of arms and services, the Mapping and Survey Branch and several other branches could operate at long range according to his directives and therefore had no daily dealings with his office.

When I assumed office, the handling of the General Staff Corps personnel files, (hitherto a responsibility of the Central Branch of the Army General Staff) had been transferred to Branch P-3 of the Army Personnel Office. The real reason for this was not the "extremely critical officer and officer replacement situation in general," but rather Hitler's distrust of the General Staff. He believed that he could supervise and influence the General Staff better if the personnel files of the General Staff Corps were handled by the Personnel Office, that is, by his Chief Adjutant. The Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Chief of the Personnel Office had planned the separation of further branches from the General Staff upon the appointment of the new Chief of the Army General Staff; at the same time, Hitler and his chief adjutant advocated changing the uniform of General Staff Corps officers. Both of these intended measures were frustrated by a flat "no" from me, as the new Chief of the Army General Staff.

A new creation by the Commander in Chief of the Army was the position

of an Inspector General of the Panzer Forces, whom he placed under his direct command, thereby increasing the number of positions in the Army directly under his control. For this reason, the position of a "Chief Mechanized Forces Officer" in the Army General Staff was discontinued and replaced by that of a "Panzer officer attached to the Chief of the Army General Staff."

In addition to the liaison officers of the Navy and the Luftwaffe * attached to the Army, a General Staff officer of the Commander of the Replacement Army was assigned as liaison officer to the Organization Branch of the Army General Staff in order to facilitate cooperation independently of the indirect channel through the Wehrmacht High Command. Furthermore, this liaison officer kept the Commander of the Replacement Army regularly informed on the situation and on requirements at the Eastern Front, a measure which proved very useful.

The temporary assignment of a liaison officer of the Waffen-SS to the Organization Branch of the Army General Staff, which was designed to facilitate cooperation with the Waffen-SS and to eliminate sources of friction more quickly, was soon discontinued, since it became evident that this officer was spying on the Army General Staff for the SS.

In order to improve cooperation between both chiefs of staff and both operations branches, the Army General Staff temporarily assigned a General Staff officer to the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff independently of the "Army General attached to the Reichsmarschall ** and

---

* Luftwaffe intelligence officer attached to the Army General Staff.

** One of the numerous titles of Goering, who simultaneously was Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe. (Reviewer)

of an Inspector General of the Panzer Forces, whom he placed under his direct command, thereby increasing the number of positions in the Army directly under his control. For this reason, the position of a "Chief Mechanized Forces Officer" in the Army General Staff was discontinued and replaced by that of a "Panzer officer attached to the Chief of the Army General Staff."

In addition to the liaison officers of the Navy and the Luftwaffe * attached to the Army, a General Staff officer of the Commander of the Replacement Army was assigned as liaison officer to the Organization Branch of the Army General Staff in order to facilitate cooperation independently of the indirect channel through the Wehrmacht High Command. Furthermore, this liaison officer kept the Commander of the Replacement Army regularly informed on the situation and on requirements at the Eastern Front, a measure which proved very useful.

The temporary assignment of a liaison officer of the Waffen-SS to the Organization Branch of the Army General Staff, which was designed to facilitate cooperation with the Waffen-SS and to eliminate sources of friction more quickly, was soon discontinued, since it became evident that this officer was spying on the Army General Staff for the SS.

In order to improve cooperation between both chiefs of staff and both operations branches, the Army General Staff temporarily assigned a General Staff officer to the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff independently of the "Army General attached to the Reichsmarschall ** and

---

* Luftwaffe intelligence officer attached to the Army General Staff.

** One of the numerous titles of Goering, who simultaneously was Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe. (Reviewer)

Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe."

Likewise, a General Staff officer was assigned to the Minister for Armament and Munitions on a temporary basis, so that requests from the front and impressions gained at the front could be transmitted to the Minister more quickly.

During this phase of the war another basic reorganization was planned by the Chief of the Army Personnel Office, as Hitler's mouthpiece. He demanded that, similarly to the organization at top-level, three officers were to be assigned to each army and army group commander as responsible advisors instead of only a chief of staff, as had been the case thitherto. These three officers were to be a chief of staff, responsible for operations; an adjutant, responsible for personnel affairs; and a National Socialist Guidance officer, responsible for morale. They were to have equal status and their interests were to be represented in the Army High Command by the Chief of the Army General Staff, the Chief of the Personnel Office and the Chief Army National Socialist Guidance Officer, respectively, all three of whom were directly responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Army. This plan did not materialize, since the Chief of the Army General Staff made it unmistakely clear that he would resign from office if it were carried out.

Such a reorganization would have caused the disunity already existing among the advisors at the top-level to spread to the high unit commands and field staffs and would have had extremely pernicious consequences. Practically speaking, it would have meant the end of the chiefs of staff with the field forces.

2. Mission and Work. The mission and the work of the Army General Staff remained substantially the same during this phase as during the preceding phase. However, things had become more difficult because of the long duration of the war, the steadily increasing shortages in all fields, the constant excessive demands on the command and on the troops and the increasing deterioration of the situation on all fronts. The following account will deal only with the principal problems of the individual branches and offices of the Army General Staff, which are characteristic of this phase.

a. Operations. During this phase of the war, the conduct of operations was governed entirely by the Russian offensives in the East and the ever expanding battles in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of operations. The absurdity of a bipartition in the operational advisory staff, realized from the outset by the former Commander in Chief of the Army and by the two successive chiefs of the Army General Staff, now became evident in practice. Whenever the situation in the East and the situation in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of operations became simultaneously acute and troops were urgently needed, the Chief of the Army General Staff and the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff argued for days, and finally had to leave the decision to Hitler, before one theater of operations would release a single division to the other theater or even a single newly activated assault gun battalion was dispatched from Germany to the front. If only one advisor had existed he would have been familiar with the details of both fronts and could have weighed both situations; the decision might have been difficult to make but would not have been a real

problem. With two advisors, each of whom was precisely informed on his own theaters of operations and naturally had a better conception of the needs of his theaters than of the needs of other theaters, an unbiased agreement was difficult.

It was therefore always necessary for Hitler to decide, and it was impossible for him to judge all military factors accurately, even though he did concern himself with all details. It is to be assumed that Hitler, as Commander in Chief of the Army, realized this, but he made a point of never departing from his principles and believed himself capable of knowing everything and of managing without real advisors. He ignored frequent references to the faultiness of the partition of responsibility and also rejected the direct suggestion of the Chief of the Army General Staff that he should go the whole way and also transfer the responsibility for advising on operations in the East to the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, especially since he distrusted the Army General Staff anyway. The operational command of the Army therefore suffered particularly during this phase of the war from the faulty top-level organization.

The conduct of operations in the East, which was the real sphere of activity of the Army General Staff, was of a purely defensive nature during this phase. Certain local offensives were nevertheless planned in order not to leave the initiative entirely to the enemy. Because of the limited forces available, the only purpose of these offensives was to straighten and shorten the front and to pin down and destroy enemy reserves. However, most of the plans were not carried out. One exception was the Orel offensive in the summer of 1943, which had the dual purpose just

referred to. Because of the long delay in starting it and because of the consequent discovery of our intention by the enemy and the resultant strong defense, it was only partially successful.

b. Organizational Problems. On the whole, the principal problem of the Army during this phase of the war was the lack of manpower. The area which had to be held by the German Army in September 1942 was out of all proportion to the available manpower. German soldiers were stationed throughout Europe -- in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, the Balkans, Roumania and far inside Russia, as well as in North Africa. Great masses of men were pinned down by all kinds of tasks in these countries, in all of which parallel organizations of the Army, the Luftwaffe, the Navy, the Waffen-SS, the administrative and Party offices, the Organization Todt * and other installations overlapped. Everywhere, our forces were not only widely dispersed but our power was divided and dissipated. The situation was aggravated by the heavy casualties which had been sustained up to that time.

This should have prompted the Supreme Command to adopt stringent and decisive measures. Such measures had been requested time and again by the Chief of the Army General Staff in a dispassionate but insistent form. The main points of the measures requested were:

(1) A radical reduction of all non-combat organizations in favor of the Army, which was bearing the brunt of the fighting in this phase of the war. Hundreds of

* A paramilitary National Socialist Party construction organization, auxiliary to the Wehrmacht. (Reviewer)

thousands of men could have been obtained from the other two branches of the Wehrmacht and other organizations, where they were either entirely idle, not fully utilized or employed at duties which constituted a duplication of effort.

(2) A simplification and merging of all rear services of the Army, the Luftwaffe, the Waffen-SS, the Organization Todt and other organizations. Large numbers of men could have been made available for new tasks by this measure.

(3) Assignment of the manpower obtained in this way to decimated Army units. Large savings could be effected by thus bringing up to full strength the depleted units, which still had and needed their rear services, instead of continuously creating new units with new rear services.

It goes without saying that similar measures were to be taken simultaneously to reduce and merge the services of the forces on the Eastern Front, thus freeing thousands of men for combat employment.

The requests set forth in (1) and (2) were naturally rejected by the organizations in question for selfish reasons and for the sake of convenience, and Hitler was unable to bring himself to make a clear decision in the matter -- again, in the last analysis, because of his distrust of the Army. The request set forth under (3) was frustrated by the stubbornness of Hitler, who was intoxicated by large numbers of divisions without

any consideration for the fact that, in manpower and striking force, the units concerned could not be considered as divisions at all.

Thus, only small-scale compromises or belated solutions were adopted in this field. These solutions were either entirely useless because they came too late, or the results produced were a mere drop in the bucket.

Expedients devised by the Commander in Chief himself, such as the increased commitment of allied troops and the creation of the Luftwaffe field divisions * proved faulty solutions in practice and did more harm than good.

In detail, the organizational work during this phase of the war consisted chiefly of the activation of special units, such as assault gun battalions and special armored units, the reduction of divisional strengths and small-scale makeshifts and improvisations, such as the creation of emergency alert units in order to obtain efficient fighting units from rear elements, and so forth. These were all unsatisfactory measures, since no decisions were made in the major organizational questions and since unsuitable improvisations serve only to hamper systematic organization.

c. Training Activities. It was especially difficult to carry out any systematic and beneficial training program during this phase of the war because the command and the troops were constantly employed in battle and because of the critical replacement situation at the fronts. Nevertheless, everything humanly possible and everything that was regarded as most urgent was done.

---

* Formed toward the end of 1942 from surplus personnel of the Luftwaffe. Absorbed by the Army in the autumn of 1943. (Reviewer)

Of particular urgency was the training of higher level commanders, since the turn-over in these officers was very great. Moreover, owing to the long duration of the war, men had been assigned to high positions of command who were too young and inexperienced and they now had to be trained by experienced officers for their new duties.

It was also a dire necessity that the troops should adapt themselves quickly to the command, combat and training methods of the enemy. This had to be done without loss of time. Likewise, officers and men had to become quickly familiar with the command and tactical problems involved in the employment of new weapons. For this purpose, small, highly trained elite units had to be organized to serve as demonstration, experimental and special task units.

In addition to the regular training program, which continued to function in accordance with established principles and in line with new experience, the following measures were adopted and carried out during this phase of the war:

(1) Training courses in the conduct of operations at high level were conducted for division commanders and unit chiefs of staffs.

(2) The temporary General Staff training program was extended systematically until it finally covered a period of nine months.

(3) As a substitute for new training manuals, the compilation of which would have required too much time, training pamphlets based upon enemy combat methods and on captured

enemy training regulations were published regularly to supplement the old field manuals.

(4) Demonstration units were organized for newly introduced weapons.

(5) Assault battalions were organized at the headquarters of the various armies to serve as what might be called elite training units; army school activities were increased, and so forth.

d. The Intelligence Service. The Eastern Intelligence Branch (Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost) continued operating according to its old proven methods and produced very good results during this phase of the war.

The card index files on officers and enlisted men of the Russian Army were enlarged to include cards showing where units were encountered, evaluation cards on Russian divisions -- showing their combat value, their losses, replacements, and their equipment, and cards on the qualifications of top-level Russian commanders. Thus, the Chief of the Army General Staff was always kept accurately informed about the distribution and location of good, average and inferior enemy divisions, as well as about the whereabouts of the best enemy army commanders and, consequently, about imminent Russian attack operations. Unfortunately, the Commander in Chief of the Army generally refused to believe the information thus obtained in spite of all efforts of the Chief of the Army General Staff to convince him. He preferred to follow his own intuition and information received from some mysterious sources or other, to the detriment of the cause. He

could not be convinced or did not want to be convinced of the value of this work, although its accuracy was proved by events time and again.

e. The Chiefs of Arms and Services. Here, two questions present themselves during this phase of the war which deserve particular attention: in the field of the Chief Infantry Officer the question of the declining fighting power of the infantry; in the field of the Chief Engineer and Fortifications Officer the question why the Army neglected to construct rear defense lines at the right time.

There was a danger that the fighting power of the infantry would deteriorate during the war and it actually did deteriorate. This was due to the long duration of the war, the heavy casualties sustained, the allocation of good replacements to the Luftwaffe, SS-units and the armored forces, and the voluntary transfer of personnel from the infantry to other arms, where life was more comfortable.

It is needless to discuss again the many various attempts which the Army command made to improve the fighting power of the infantry. They were never successful and the problem remained unsolved because of the many mistakes made at the top-level. This was regrettable, not only for the sake of the command but more particularly for the sake of the ordinary German infantryman, who suffered untold miseries, carried the heaviest burden and had the most difficult assignment right up to the end.

The question of rear positions became acute for the Army command immediately after the beginning of the Russian offensive. The Chief of the Army General Staff tried again and again with the utmost insistence to obtain approval for the construction of rear positions, which could

have been developed without difficulty. Every effort was frustrated by the obstinacy of the Commander in Chief of the Army, who believed that the command and the troops would not hold the line quite as tenaciously if they knew that good positions awaited them in the rear. He never deviated from this idea and even forbade the reconnoitering of rear defense positions. If it became absolutely necessary to withdraw, he ordered the positions prepared at the last minute, but then it was usually too late. This neglect had fateful consequences.

f. The Chief of Supply and Administration (Generalquartiermeister). The Russian offensive and the simultaneous increase in combat activity in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war effected the activities of the Chief of Supply and Administration just as it did the operational command. Requests for ammunition, weapons and equipment increased considerably. Owing to the extreme shortage, a decision had to be made as to the allocation of each ammunition train,-- whether it should be directed to the East, the West or the South. The advisors on the Eastern and the Western theaters disagreed just as frequently about these allocations as they did about operations and because of the defects in his top-level organization, it became necessary for the Commander in Chief to make the decisions.

Otherwise, the Chief of Supply and Administration and his organization performed satisfactorily even during this phase of the war.

g. Transportation. During this phase of the war, the East presented many extremely difficult problems for the Chief of Army Transportation and his agencies because of the conditions peculiar to the country

as such and to the theater of operations in particular. Here, the transportation service had to prove its mettle and had to be very flexible in the employment of all available means. Many innovations which had been thought impossible were introduced under the stress of circumstances and proved successful.

The main problem was how to transport the few available reserves as quickly as possible to the danger spots despite the bad railway situation. This problem was solved by ordering the establishment of "combat transports" and "replacement group transports" and by overloading to increase the carrying capacity of trains. It was thus possible to ship to the danger spots as many troops in one day as had previously been shipped in four. It is needless to stress that this was of the utmost importance in view of the situation on the Eastern Front at this time.

h. General Staff Personnel Affairs and Replacements. Despite the previously mentioned transfer of the personnel files of the General Staff Corps to the Army Personnel Office, the personnel policy of the General Staff Corps was very strongly influenced by the Chief of the Army General Staff during this phase of the war, inasmuch as the Personnel Office was required to settle all pertinent questions "in agreement" with the Chief of the Army General Staff. If an agreement could not be reached, the Chief of the Army General Staff almost always had his way. During this phase of the war no interference by the Party or the SS occurred as far as the Army General Staff was concerned.

In order to fill General Staff positions which had become vacant in the course of the long war, the shortened training course for General

Staff officer replacements had to be continued. Although the period of this training course was constantly extended -- finally to nine months -- and although only especially good instructors and candidates were chosen, it still remained an emergency measure. The serious defects which resulted had to be accepted as a necessary evil, since no other solution appeared possible during the war.

i. Liaison Officers. The employment of liaison officers has certain disadvantages. Nevertheless, increased use had to be made of them in an effort to offset to some extent the unsatisfactory top-level organization.

j. The Headquarters Commandant. The staff reductions which took place after the appointment of the new Chief of the Army General Staff must be mentioned at this point because they are of general importance.

All staffs, and naturally those at higher level in particular, had increased considerably as the war went on. In some cases, things were being taken too easily and this could not be tolerated in view of the shortage of manpower at the front. Here again, the headquarters of the Army High Command had to set a good example. The entire headquarters personnel therefore was reduced by almost fifty percent. Private cooks for the senior officers of the headquarters and similar privileges had to be discontinued; military personnel had to be replaced as far as possible by woman staff auxiliaries and woman signal auxiliaries. All military personnel released in this way were retrained in special courses and shipped to the front as replacements.

3. Position and Authority. Many disadvantageous reorganizations

had taken place to curtail the authority of the Chief of the Army General Staff, and that authority had been encroached upon in many ways; Hitler distrusted and openly disapproved him; numerous officers of the General Staff with troops had been lost, others had been transferred from the General Staff Corps to assume command of units and the uniformity of the General Staff Corps had been weakened by the employment of over-age General Staff officers of World War I and insufficiently trained replacements. Nevertheless, the General Staff succeeded in maintaining its former position and authority and was greatly respected by the troops even during the third phase of the war.

In contrast with the situation in World War I, the General Staff in World War II exercised less influence on strategic decisions, which were handled by Hitler himself to a large extent, than on the careful and skillful implementation of such decisions. Many seemingly impossible tasks were made possible; wrong measures were as least ameliorated for the benefit of the troops and unnecessary losses were prevented. This was very soon realized by the troops and strengthened the position of the General Staff. Aside from this, General Staff officers quite often took an active and personal part in the fighting in modern warfare and were seen in the front lines more often than had been the case in World War I. This also made a good impression upon the troops.

As the war went on, young daredevil officers who had never served in the General Staff were appointed to high commands in accordance with the principles prevailing at the top level. Here, the General Staff also exercised a good influence, in that the lack of General Staff knowledge on

the part of a higher or intermediate field commander could be balanced by the assignment of an especially good chief of staff.

The influence of the General Staff should not be overrated, however, since it actually concerned only careful general staff planning and the care of the troops and -- as previously mentioned -- did not extend to basic decisions and measures taken by the command, inasmuch as the General Staff itself had no real authority of any kind. The unit commander alone was responsible for the operations of his unit -- provided that he had not been limited in his actions by higher authority. He alone was decorated for his ability to lead troops, not his chief of staff, but the chief of staff was also called to account in case of failure.

V. ARMY GENERAL STAFF - WEHRMACHT HIGH COMMAND - WEHRMACHT OPERATIONS STAFF RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

1. Relations. The Wehrmacht High Command and its Wehrmacht Operations Staff had a dual function in its relations with the Army General Staff. On the one hand, the Wehrmacht High Command served as a staff for the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht in Wehrmacht matters, that is, as the staff of a superior agency; on the other hand, it served as the staff of the Commander in Chief of the Army for the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war, in other words, as what might be called a rival of the Army General Staff. This determined the basis for mutual relations.

In the first instance, practical cooperation and good relations definitely were possible, especially since a Wehrmacht command * was

* A unified armed forces high command (Reviewer).

absolutely essential, although relations suffered somewhat because of the preferential treatment given the other two branches of the Wehrmacht -- the Luftwaffe because of the political position of the Reichsmarschall *, the Navy because of its special mission. It is only natural that this circumstance had an adverse effect on Army General Staff - Wehrmacht High Command - Wehrmacht Operations Staff relations.

In the second instance, practical cooperation and the maintenance of good relations were not quite so easy, since the Wehrmacht Operations Staff handled matters which definitely belonged within the jurisdiction of the Army General Staff and were, in fact, a part of its specific mission. This necessarily brought about friction.

The Army General Staff had a triple function in its dealings with the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff. First, as the staff of the Chief of the Army General Staff, who in turn was directly responsible to the Commander in Chief of the Army and by no means under the authority of the Wehrmacht High Command. Secondly, some branches of the Army General Staff simultaneously were authorized to act on behalf of the Wehrmacht (the Chief of Army Transportation was at the same time Chief of Wehrmacht Transportation, the Chief Army Signal Officer was at the same time Chief of the Wehrmacht Signal Service and in these capacities they were subordinate to the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command). Thirdly, other branches of the Army General Staff, although they were not simultaneously Wehrmacht agencies and were not responsible to the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, had to serve the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht

---

* One of the numerous titles of Hermann Goering, who was simultaneously Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe (Reviewer).

Operations Staff in matters pertaining exclusively to the Army (the Western Intelligence Branch -- Abteilung Fremde Heere West -- ; the Chief of Supply and Administration, in administrative matters; the chiefs of arms and services, in matters concerning the OKH troops in the Wehrmacht theaters of operations).

The first of these three cases was a clear-cut relationship, a relationship between two independent staffs working side by side.

In the second and third cases the relationship was very ambiguous. Some branches of the Army General Staff were called upon to serve two masters, being either officially subordinate to them or unofficially dependent on them. It was entirely possible for them to receive instructions from one superior and contradictory orders from another, so that they were caught between two fires. This harbored many possibilities of conflict and necessarily had a detrimental effect on relations between the staffs.

Aside from the relationship which resulted automatically between the two staffs from the system of organization, relations between two staffs are always basically determined by the chiefs of the respective staffs. Therefore, this also had to be the case as far as relations between the Wehrmacht High Command, the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, and the Army General Staff were concerned. The Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff had become blind and unquestioning tools of Hitler. If he was unwilling to follow their example, an example which he actually could not and would not follow, the Chief of the Army General Staff would soon find himself alone in his work, in his

position with respect to the Commander in Chief of the Army and in his struggle. This unavoidably had to affect the necessary personal and professional cooperation between the chiefs, and such was actually the case. For this reason relations between the chiefs of these staffs were very strained. Naturally, this state of affairs could not be concealed from the staffs and soon affected them and their individual members.

3. Cooperation. In spite of the severely strained relations, the Chief of the Army General Staff, the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, together with their staffs, were compelled to work together; had they failed to do so, both the command and the troops would have had to suffer and this had to be averted.

Because of their basically different views, cooperation between the chiefs naturally was not characterized by complete confidence and was limited to the absolutely necessary professional matters which concerned both parties. However, even then differences of opinion and disputes usually occurred. Neither informed the other completely about all details of his theaters of operations; in fact, the information they could exchange was limited by Hitler's security order, which has already been mentioned.

Generally speaking, cross-orientation was restricted to the matters discussed during the situation conferences at Hitler's headquarters. The Chief of the Army General Staff did not obtain much information at these discussions, especially since he usually left Hitler's headquarters immediately after he had finished his report on the situation in the East.

The closer cooperation maintained between the staffs through the branch chiefs and their personnel naturally concerned minor details rather than basic questions. This cooperation can be divided into three kinds, namely, cooperation by those army agencies whose chiefs simultaneously had Wehrmacht responsibilities, cooperation by army agencies which officially served the Wehrmacht High Command or the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, and cooperation between branches of the three staffs which were entirely independent of each other. There were also fields in which there was no cooperation at all and in which the respective branches of the three staffs operated parallel to each other.

Cooperation with those army agencies whose chiefs were authorized to act on behalf of the Wehrmacht High Command, namely, the Chief of Army Transportation and the Chief Army Signal Officer, was of course good, since the chiefs on the one hand could coordinate Wehrmacht and Army interests properly, and, on the other hand were restrained in dealing with the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command by their own very strong Army interests. The conflicts which arose from the fact that they had to serve the Chief of the Army General Staff in addition to the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command were usually smoothed over because they, as individuals, possessed the full confidence of the Chief of the Army General Staff. Thus, these agencies worked in a thoroughly efficient way, and, as far as I can judge, served both the interests of the Army General Staff and those of the Wehrmacht High Command.

Cooperation with the army agencies which were unofficially required to serve the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, or

whose service had to be shared by the latter, was likewise satisfactory and in some cases even good. These included the Western Intelligence Branch (Abteilung Fremde Heere West); the administrative branches of the Chief of Supply and Administration; the Mapping and Survey Branch and certain of the chiefs of arms and services.

The Western Intelligence Branch was actually at the exclusive disposal of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff for its Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. As Chief of the Army General Staff, I even favored close cooperation by this branch with the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, since it insured that the latter, as well as Hitler, would obtain accurate and objective information. Unfortunately, the services of the intelligence branch were not used as extensively as they should have been, as far as I can judge. The reason was that the very objective and critical approach of the branch chief was not well liked by the Wehrmacht Operations Staff.

The Chief of Army Supply and Administration, who was responsible for the administration of occupied territories, had many conflicts with the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, but I must assume from my knowledge of his character that he nevertheless served him in an absolutely correct manner. As Chief of the Army General Staff, I was happy that I had nothing to do with this administrative work, which at that time was very disagreeable.

In the Mapping and Survey Branch, cooperation was without friction, insomuch as only technical questions were involved.

Cooperation in certain fields of the chiefs of arms and services was more difficult, since the Wehrmacht High Command, or the Wehrmacht Operations

Staff, frequently interfered in matters which were actually the business of the Army General Staff. Despite this fact, I encouraged this cooperation in order to prevent the issue of entirely inappropriate orders by the Wehrmacht High Command or the Wehrmacht Operations Staff for the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of operations.

Cooperation between staffs which were not interdependent was naturally very difficult because of the contradictory attitudes of the chiefs and the divergence in their basic ideas. This condition became even more difficult when the Wehrmacht Operations Staff established counterparts to some of the Army General Staff agencies, which performed the same functions -- usually with insufficient means -- and developed into rivals of the Army General Staff agencies. In spite of all this, more or less satisfactory cooperation was maintained in many fields in the interest of the common cause and also because the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff depended to a great extent upon the information supplied by the Army General Staff and even upon its services, such as the courier and reporting service to the field units, while the Army General Staff needed information from agencies of the Wehrmacht High Command, such as the Counterintelligence Office.

Information needed by the Wehrmacht High Command was freely and extensively supplied by the branches of the Army General Staff, such as the Organization Branch and the Chief of Supply and Administration, although this information sometimes was used to the detriment of the Army General Staff itself.

Intelligence data requested by the Army General Staff from the

Wehrmacht High Command Counterintelligence Office was furnished willingly by this agency, particularly since the attitude of the Chief of the Counterintelligence Office and his branches differed fundamentally from that of the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command.

Nevertheless, fields remained in which there was no cooperation of any kind. Thus, the Army General Staff was often taken by surprise by new Wehrmacht High Command orders, which, although they concerned the sphere of work and the interests of the Army General Staff, had not been brought to its attention beforehand. Naturally, this again resulted in friction and, when important matters were concerned, in official complaints to the Supreme Commander. However, he himself occasionally made use of the Wehrmacht High Command to issue orders which concerned the Army General Staff, particularly when he expected that the Army General Staff would necessarily have a contrary opinion in the matter. The fact that such usages considerably hampered cooperation needs no further explanation.

Likewise -- and this also must be called a lack of cooperation -- the Wehrmacht Operations Staff failed to inform the Army General Staff often enough and at the right time about the plans and situation in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. Branches of the Army General Staff which, like the Chief of Supply and Administration, were also supposed to service the army units in these theaters, therefore had no accurate information to go on. They nevertheless did everything possible on their own initiative to service the troops properly and impartially, although this was frequently extremely difficult owing to the lack of cooperation.

Summing up, the Chief of the Army General Staff was confronted with

the following situation as far as cooperation between the Army General Staff, the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff was concerned:

Despite the disagreement among the chiefs and despite the fundamental difference in ideas, the Army General Staff did everything within its power to cooperate as well as possible with the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff for the common cause.

As far as I can judge, the branch chiefs and their assistants in the Wehrmacht High Command and Wehrmacht Operations Staff branches generally had the best intention of cooperating objectively with the Army General Staff. Personally they did their best, but apparently they were compelled frequently by the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command or the Chief of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, and probably also by Hitler himself, to do things which ran counter to any cooperation. As previously stated, cooperation was completely lacking in some fields.

I am unable to judge whether the picture presented above would appear the same from the viewpoint of the Wehrmacht High Command. However, this chapter is intended to give an objective and unbiased account of the great difficulties in the way of cooperation -- difficulties which were caused both by the system of organization and by the individuals involved -- and to explain why cooperation was not ideal.

VI. ARMY GENERAL STAFF - NAVY - LUFTWAFFE RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

1. Relations. Relations between the Army General Staff and the other two branches of the Wehrmacht were determined by the attitude of the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht toward the different branches, by the conduct

and the command methods of the Wehrmacht High Command, by the missions assigned to the three branches, and by the personality of the three Commanders in Chief and their Chiefs of Staff.

The attitude of the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht was different toward each branch of the Wehrmacht and he showed the difference openly in his speech and actions. The Luftwaffe was his favorite because of the position of its Commander in Chief, Reichsmarschall Goering, and because it was a National Socialist creation. He was also very fond of the Navy, especially after he had appointed Grossadmiral Doenitz as its Commander in Chief. The Army, to him, had always been and always remained the black sheep of the family, even after he had assumed the position of its commander in chief. His sentiments are revealed by the "Fritsch affair" and his attitude toward Brauchitsch. His deep distrust of the Army General Staff and the Army generals was probably the cause of his dislike of the entire Army.

The branches of the Wehrmacht were soon aware that their Supreme Commander had a different attitude toward each of them and each acted accordingly in obtaining approval of special requests, in protecting its special interests and in passing judgment on the other branches.

What was necessarily particularly unpleasant and humiliating to the Army General Staff was the fact that, because of his feeling toward the Army, the Supreme Commander gave more credence to reports from the Luftwaffe than to those of the Army General Staff, even if the reports concerned ground operations and the measures and attitudes of the army group commanders. This naturally had a detrimental effect upon mutual relations.

As the staff of the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, the Wehrmacht High Command naturally was guided in its actions by the basic attitude of its commander and was more cautious in issuing orders to, and interfering with, the Luftwaffe and the Navy than in its dealings with the Army. Even in basic questions, such as the allocation of manpower, it did not dare to take any effective measures against the Luftwaffe and the Navy, even if such measures were necessary from a purely functional point of view and even though itself admitting this necessity. This attitude of the Wehrmacht High Command naturally also had an adverse affect on the relations between the branches of the Wehrmacht.

The missions of the three branches of the Wehrmacht were determined by the specific nature and general purpose of each of them. Thus, the task of the Navy was a special one and was closely defined; only in special cases did the Navy come in contact with the Army, particularly in the Eastern theater. The mission of the Luftwaffe, however, coincided with that of the Army in many points. This called for especially close cooperation but also created many sources of friction.

Relations between the leading men of the three branches of the Wehrmacht were adversely affected by the fact that the commanders in chief of the Luftwaffe and Navy had no real counterpart in the Army, since the Commander in Chief of the Army, Hitler, was also the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and thus their superior. Thus, the commanders in chief of the Luftwaffe and the Navy brought their requests and disputes, which otherwise would have been handled on the Commander in Chief level, directly to the attention of Hitler, the Sureme Commander, and this naturally had to affect

relations among the three branches.

The relations between the three chiefs of staffs, the Chief of the Army General Staff, the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Chief of the Naval Operations Staff, were determined by the fact that all had the same military education and shared the same views. Therefore, relations between them were good and frank, although they were also influenced by their respective commanders in chief, who were their superiors.

Summing up, it can be said that relations between the three branches of the Wehrmacht and their general staffs were generally good despite the difficult conditions mentioned above, and that they provided a basis for close, impartial cooperation.

2. Cooperation. Cooperation between the Army General Staff and the other branches of the Wehrmacht was achieved through discussions between the Chief of the Army General Staff and the commanders in chief of the other two branches, through meetings, exchange of views, telephone conversations and correspondence between the chiefs of the three general staffs, through personal discussions and telephone conversations and correspondence between the various departmental chiefs and their advisors, through the activities of the liaison officers, through the exchange of daily reports, other important messages, written estimates of the situation and basic orders, and through cooperation between the subordinate field staffs.

Discussions between the Chief of the Army General Staff and the commanders in chief of the other branches of the Wehrmacht naturally could deal only with basic questions. Discussions with the Commander in Chief of the Navy were, of course, rare. Discussions with the Commander in

Chief of the Luftwaffe soon suffered a setback because of disagreements between him and the Chief of the Army General Staff, which were actually due to a clash of personalities. These discussions were soon discontinued.

Cooperation between the three chiefs of staff was good and close and was augmented by a mutual feeling of confidence. All three had more or less the same military views and the same worries, and appreciated each others difficulties. Of particular value were the joint confidential meetings initiated by the Chief of the Army General Staff *. At these meetings, dinner was followed by a confidential discussion of the over-all situation with all its joint problems and the differences of opinion which may have arisen in the written correspondence of subordinate specialists and offices.

Cooperation between the Chief of the Army General Staff and his opposite number in the Luftwaffe had to be, and actually was, very close because of the many tasks which they had in common. Quite frequently, the two chiefs of staff compared notes prior to the situation conferences at Hitler's headquarters and found themselves in full agreement in their opposition to the views of Hitler and his Chiefs of the Wehrmacht High Command and the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, and then gave each other mutual support. Thanks to this cooperation they were frequently able to eliminate or minimize many points of friction at the very outset.

The branch chiefs of the general staffs and their assistants cooperated very closely whenever necessary. At this level cooperation was

* When speaking of the Chief of the Army General Staff during the period under review, the author is referring to himself (Reviewer).

necessarily very close between the two staffs because of their joint tasks. Any differences of opinion which arose -- chiefly through conflicts between subordinate staffs -- were eliminated by the intervention of the two chiefs of staff.

The practice of assigning special liaison officers to the other branches of the Wehrmacht proved very useful. Many problems arose which did not require handling at the chief-of-staff level and which were settled by the liaison officers. Moreover, the liaison officers were always close at hand whenever information regarding the other branch of the Wehrmacht was needed. Through their constant presence at the other branch of the Wehrmacht they were in a good position to represent the interests of their own branch and point out its possibilities or limitations. They were also of great service whenever their branches reported on the daily situation.

Another useful means of encouraging cooperation was the exchange of daily reports and other important messages, written estimates of the situation -- even those by subordinate commanders --, basic orders, instructions, memoranda and regulations. Here again, the fact that cooperation between the Army General Staff and the Luftwaffe General Staff had to be, and actually was, particularly extensive can be attributed to their common tasks. The exchange of views suffered somewhat from the fact that the Luftwaffe was very reluctant to pass on information unfavorable to itself, such as losses, reverses, and the like, and did not give a clear picture of them. As far as one could judge, this was probably the result of orders which Goering had issued.

At lower levels, cooperation between unit commanders and unit chiefs

of staffs and their assistants also was maintained through liaison officers and the exchange of reports and orders. It is only natural that a certain amount of mistrust existed here too, owing to the discrimination shown by the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht toward certain branches of the Wehrmacht. Cooperation at the lower levels was chiefly a matter of personalities and varied accordingly. If bad, the two chiefs of staff had to try to straighten matters out.

From a professional point of view cooperation between the Army General Staff and the Luftwaffe General Staff existed chiefly in the following fields:

Cross-orientation on the capacities and potentialities of the two branches of the Wehrmacht; exchange of opinions on the further development of the situation; exchange of views concerning the enemy situation; coordination of action during operations; exchange of experience; mutual support during training; agreements concerning the use of jointly owned facilities and the use of facilities belonging to each other.

The actual strength of each branch and the possibilities of employing that strength had to be known to the other branch. Thus, the limitations of each branch were realized and no impossibilities were requested. At the same time, the one branch was familiar with the capacity of the other and could perhaps render assistance. Close and frank cooperation in this field was of particular importance during this phase of the war, since both branches of the Wehrmacht had already been greatly weakened and were hampered by the heavy losses in manpower and materiel caused by the excessive demands of the Supreme Command. A sympathetic understanding of each others

potentialities often made it possible to remove difficulties and to render mutual assistance. The regrettable fact that frank cooperation was sometimes lacking on one side has been mentioned.

An exchange of estimates as to expected developments of the situation was essential. Only then was it possible for one branch to assess correctly, within its own sphere, the possibility of a supporting action by the other. This was particularly imperative, since, during situation discussions at his headquarters, Hitler deliberately described the situation in an optimistic and biased manner and openly ignored undeniable facts in a manner which could not be other than harmful. Therefore, a very special effort had to be made in this field to obtain close cooperation between the chiefs of staff as a substitute for the harmonizing influence Hitler failed to exert in his position as the Supreme Commander. This close cooperation was usually achieved if the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe did not interfere.

Particularly important was the exchange of views concerning the enemy situation, which each branch judged according to its own data. Here, close cooperation could furnish missing information, correct mistakes, and produce a good over-all picture. This was particularly necessary, since the Army had no reconnaissance planes of its own whereas the Army General Staff was in a better position than the Luftwaffe General Staff to judge enemy troop movements and transfers.

The principal field for cooperation, which was already prepared through an exchange of views in the above mentioned fields, was, of course, the coordination of efforts during operations. Operations of the Army had

to be discussed thoroughly with the Luftwaffe General Staff; the requirements of the Luftwaffe had to be given the greatest possible consideration; and steps had to be taken to insure the most effective use of air support. For this reason both chiefs of staff discussed such operations during the initial planning stage and kept constantly in touch with each other right up to the date on which the operation started as well as during the operation. The Army General Staff hardly ever participated in the planning of strategic air warfare, inasmuch as decisions concerning this type of warfare were usually made in the course of discussions between Hitler and Goering.

Views were constantly exchanged about the practical experience which had been acquired by both general staffs. The subjects covered included cooperation during operations, the enemy's method of command, the combat methods of enemy troops, antitank operations on the ground or from the air, and the like.

Furthermore, the Army's experience in the training and command of troops had to be made available to the Luftwaffe General Staff for its Luftwaffe field divisions. Although the Luftwaffe field divisions were activated against the will of the Army General Staff and although that staff was opposed to their existence as an obvious organizational mistake -- a fact which events proved more than right -- it assisted the Luftwaffe materially in the interests of the common cause as far as the activation, training and command of these divisions were concerned. It furnished as many instructors, training cadres, officers and noncommissioned officers as possible, invited the divisions to participate in its own training

courses and furnished demonstration units and the like, naturally without being able to change the fundamental weaknesses inherent in the organization of divisions of this type.

In addition to cooperation in basic fields, specialists, such as the Chief of Army Transportation, the Chief Army Signal Officer -- both in their capacity as Wehrmacht agencies -- and the Chief of Supply and Administration also cooperated closely with the Luftwaffe. Cooperation in these fields covered the transportation of GHQ troops by the Luftwaffe and the supplying of encircled army elements by air. The fact that grave mistakes were frequently made, as was the case at Stalingrad, was not due to any lack of cooperation between the two general staffs but rather to Hitler's stubborn attitude, which nothing could change and in which he had the support of Goering.

Cooperation between the Army General Staff and the Naval Operations Staff was also usually maintained in the above-mentioned fields, but it was less intensive, since these two branches had very little in common as far as the Eastern theater was concerned. For this reason, cooperation between these two branches was theoretical rather than practical. In actual practice it existed only on the two wings of the Eastern Front, where the Baltic Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, formed the boundaries of the front line. The main fields of cooperation were the seaborne transportation of army forces and army supplies and, on rare occasions, artillery support by naval forces from the sea.

The point in dispute, as far as cooperation between the Army and the Navy was concerned, was the coastal artillery. This problem affected the

Army General Staff only to a small degree, since it actually arose only in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. The only person affected was the Army Chief Artillery Officer and he only in that part of his work where he had to cooperate with the Wehrmacht Operations Staff.

Summing up, the Chief of the Army General Staff had the following impression of cooperation between the General Staff and the Luftwaffe:

Cooperation with the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe was not good because of his personality and his attitude toward the Army.

Cooperation with the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff was good and marked by mutual confidence. Both chiefs of staff tried, sometimes with success, to compensate by means of close and understanding cooperation for the coordination which the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht failed to bring about, for the mistakes made by the Wehrmacht High Command and for the flaws in the organization of the Wehrmacht.

Cooperation between the two general staffs was also beneficial.

Cooperation between lower echelons varied and depended upon personalities.

The first Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, Generaloberst Jeschonnek, with whom I frequently discussed this problem, was of a similar opinion. The opinion of the second Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, General Korten, is not known to me. Cooperation with him was no longer so close because his position was different from that of Generaloberst Jeschonnek.

Cooperation with the Navy, particularly with the Naval Operations Staff, was likewise good insofar as the Navy played any part at all in

the Eastern theater of operations.

The severe friction which developed on the Eastern Front between Army Group South and its opposite number in the Navy during the evacuation of the Crimea was, in my opinion, not so much due to poor cooperation or a lack of mutual understanding but was, rather, Hitler's fault. Despite the very strongly worded request of the Chief of the Army General Staff that the withdrawal from the Crimea be prepared and carried out systematically, Hitler flatly refused to agree. Naturally, it subsequently proved very difficult to improvise this withdrawal because of the paucity of the means available and because of the chaotic conditions on the Crimea.

The opinion of the Chief of the Naval Operations Staff on cooperation between the Army General Staff and the Navy is unknown to me.

VII. SUMMARY

This chapter has described the Army High Command as a part of the Wehrmacht High Command during the September 1942 - June 1944 period. All questions directly concerning the top-level command have been fully dealt with, namely:

The organization of the command; the personalities of high-level commanders and their advisors and assistants; the methods of command; the influence of individuals upon the command; working procedures; relations and cooperation between the Army High Command, the Wehrmacht High Command and the other branches of the Wehrmacht; the principal problems which the command had to face; the tasks with which it was confronted and how they were accomplished, or what attempts were made to accomplish

them, and the difficulties which were encountered.

The factual details on the command organization and its activities, which are valid for the entire period (pre-war - mobilization- wartime) and provided the basis for this phase of the war, have been discussed exhaustively in the 1500 pages * hitherto written of the study under review in the first part of this manuscript. It is assumed that the contents of those pages are known to the reader and therefore they have been touched on only slightly. Nevertheless, this chapter represents a complete picture which is fully intelligible in itself.

The personalities of the men in top-level command positions, their peculiarities, the influence they had, their methods of command and the manner in which they accomplished things have been emphasized more strongly in this chapter than in the preceding parts of the over-all study. This was necessary because it is the personality of men which animates an already existing organization, so that judgment can only be passed on the organization after the peculiarities and actions of the men have been described. It was also necessary because the personal leadership by Hitler became more and more pronounced during this phase of the war. If the account had been purely technical, with less attention devoted to personalities, the characteristic features of this phase of the war and the practical effects of the existing organization as well as of the changes to which this organization was subjected would never have been brought out as clearly as is necessary for a full appreciation of the situation. It would then have been impossible to give a clear account

* MSS # P-041a - P-041hh (Reviewer).

of "how things actually were," and no complete basis could have been provided for the development of ideas for the future. I have intentionally omitted personal matters, such as my own position as Chief of the Army General Staff during the phase discussed, my disagreements with Hitler and my resignation at the end of June 1944, because this would have gone beyond the scope of this objective treatise.

Questions which concerned the Supreme Command only indirectly have only been touched on and have not been dealt with in detail. In this category belongs above all the abundant practical experience acquired by the command, both experience in the actual exercise of command and other, incidental, experience of use to the command.

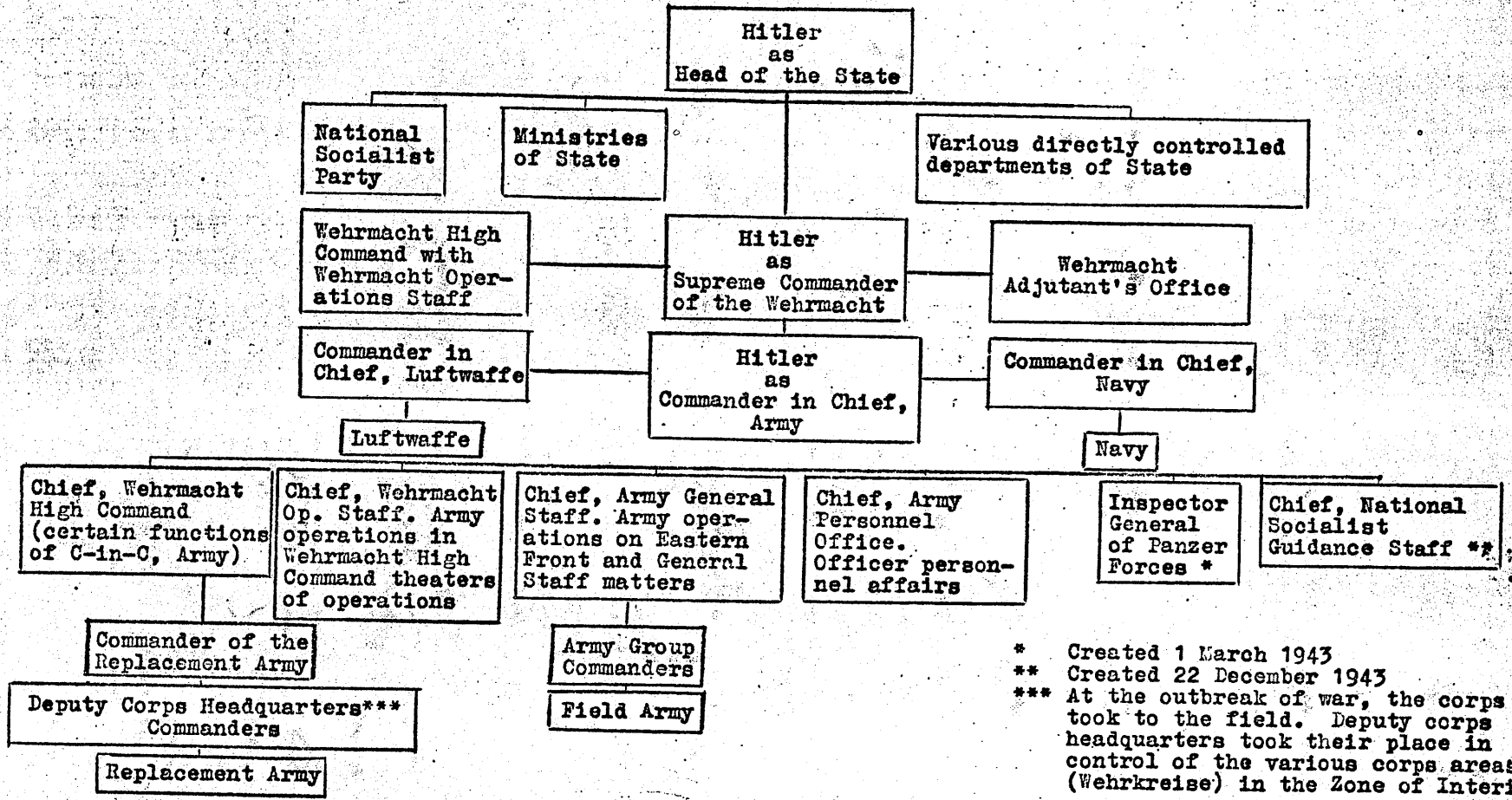
The experience in the actual exercise of command is experience which is essential in order to draw conclusions for future ideas. This will be handled in the next study, entitled "The Army High Command as a Part of the Wehrmacht High Command -- Ideas for the Future."

By incidental experience is meant here experience gained by the High Command in many fields other than the exercise of command which is valuable for future exploitation. The following are only a few subjects from the phases of the war discussed by me: "Organizational Problems During a Long War Involving Heavy Personnel Losses", "Improvisations, Their Merits and Demerits and Their Influence on Organization", "Tank Warfare in the East", "The Russian Army, Its Command System, Its Commanders, Its Combat Methods", "Russia, Its Climate and People and Their Influence on Military Operations", "Training Experiences Gained During Many Years of War." These experiences are well worth being recorded since otherwise they will be lost to posterity.

I do not know whether anything has been done to record them, or whether anything is intended. In any case, a great amount of additional work would be entailed. I considered it necessary to mention these things in my final remarks because they at least indirectly concern the "German High Command as a Part of the Wehrmacht High Command."

Organizational Chart A

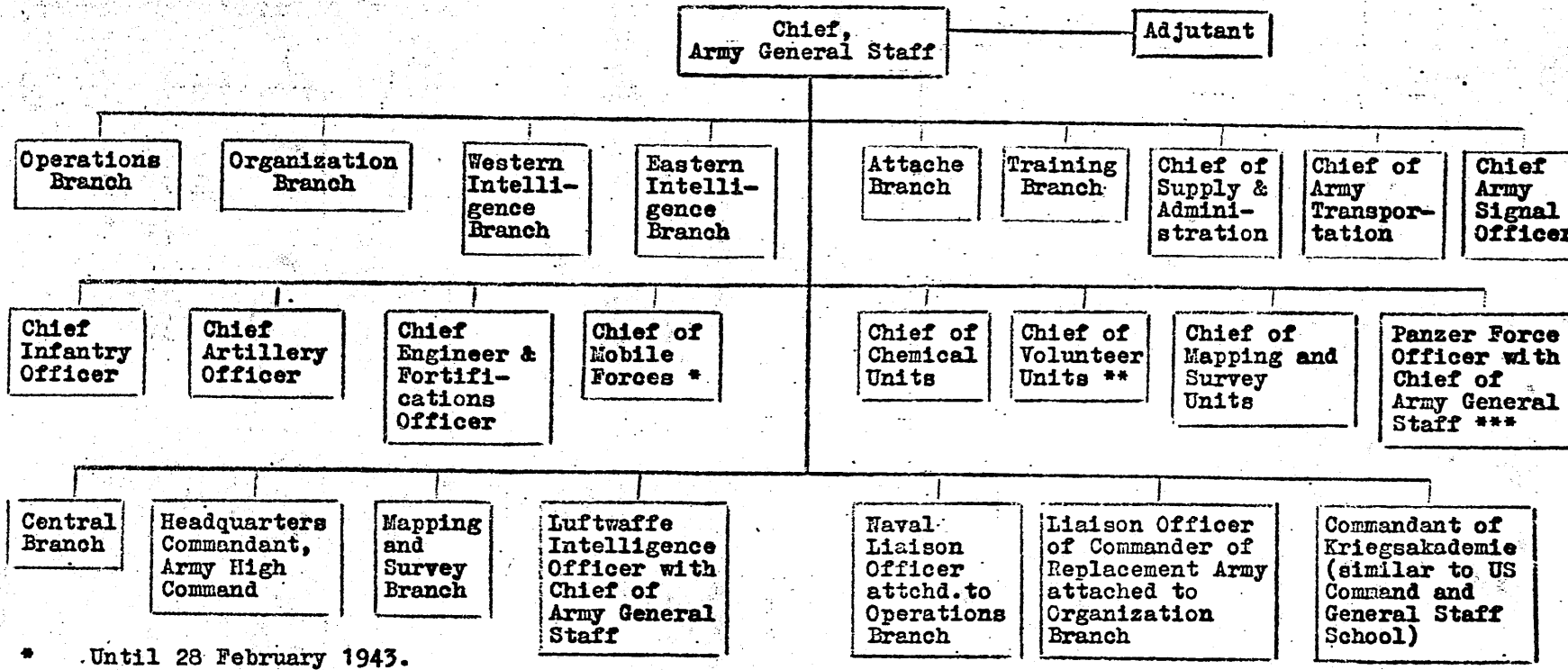
THE GERMAN ARMY HIGH COMMAND
SEPTEMBER 1942 - JUNE 1944



* Created 1 March 1943
** Created 22 December 1943
*** At the outbreak of war, the corps took to the field. Deputy corps headquarters took their place in control of the various corps areas (Wehrkreise) in the Zone of Interio

Organizational Chart B

THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF
SEPTEMBER 1942 - JUNE 1944



* Until 28 February 1943.
** Composed of foreigners, usually Eastern nationals, with German cadres.
*** Until 1 March 1943.